The Builder.

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IS it is now generally understood that there is something radically wrong in the management of the Government School of Design, we may venture to anticipate that an alteration will be made before long. We are most anxious to assist in bringing about this alteration, through no captious views, no personal likes or dislikes, but from conviction of the present inefficiency of the school, and an honest desire to see it productive of those advantages to the country which may reasonably be expected from it. This is no new cry with us. We pointed out, long ago, that things were not right there; and shewed students in rebellion, masters resigning, and the school disorganized. After that, quiet was restored, but it was not a healthy quiet. The cause of the previous disruption remained: no efforts were made to improve the system, though the disorder was forcibly kept down for a time: and the result is that, gradually acquiring force, the disease has again made itself visible. It is to be hoped this time, that the council, remembering that an eruption on the skin (wisè dispensation of nature to free herself from objectionable matter), is the result of an evil, and not the evil itself,—will look deeper, and not think the cure complete till they have obtained a healthful system for the School of Design.

The efficiency of this establishment is as important to our readers, individually, as it is to any other section of the public, leaving out of the question its importance in a general point of view to all. It is to this we look for that intermediate class of artists, and artistical operatives, so much required in architectural decoration. A few statistical particulars, therefore, drawn from the fifth (last) report of the council, will not be considered uninteresting.

The amount of Parliamentary grant received for the year 1845-46 for Somerset House School was 2,286*l.*, and for annual aid to provincial schools 2,540*l.* The total amount of receipts available for the year ending April 30, 1846, was 11,089*l.* The total payments, 7,364*l.*

The estimated expenditure for current year is 5,381*l.*

The following gentlemen are the present instructors:—

Morning Classes.

Mr. Henry Le Jeune.—Drawing and Painting the Figure.
Mr. Alfred Stevens.—Drawing and Painting Ornament, Geometrical Drawing and Modelling.
Mr. John Murdoch.—Assistant Master.

Evening Classes.

Mr. Henry James Townsend.—Drawing and Painting Ornament and Modelling.
Mr. John Calcott Horsley.—Drawing and Painting the Figure.
Mr. Charles James Richardson.—Ornament and Geometrical Drawing.
Mr. John Murdoch.—Assistant Master.

In the female school, there is a superintendent, Mrs. Mclan (name not mentioned in the report), and a teacher of wood-engraving.

The average monthly number of students in 1845-46, was 212,—77 *less* than in the preceding year.

The annual grants to provincial schools were.

Manchester	£350
Birmingham	350
Glasgow	350
Nottingham	150
Norwich	150
York	150
Newcastle	150
Sheffield	150
Coventry	150
Paisley (proposed) with supply of furniture and examples of art	250
Stoke and Hanley, Staffordshire Potteries, (proposed) each with outfit	150
Leeds (proposed) with outfit	80

The monthly average number of students in provincial schools, was 1,246.

The Spitalfields' school received 350*l.*

The sum of 250*l.* has been paid on account of five numbers of a long talked of drawing-book, concerning which we should like to hear more. We have an indistinct recollection of a much larger sum, paid for a similar purpose long ago, and of a pile of copies unuseable, stacked away in Somerset House.

Let us return now to the present state of affairs. Mr. J. Townsend, the master of painting in the evening classes, and Mr. C. J. Richardson, another of the evening masters, have, separately, forwarded an address to the council (as already noticed by us) calling attention to the management of the institution. The remarks in these letters, which are carefully worded to avoid personal offence, fully bear out our previous conclusions, and are made "under a sense of public duty, and under the sincere conviction that *unless some change take place in the present management of the School, the hopes excited in this country, in reference to* Design, *will receive but a very imperfect realization.*"

The chief objections urged are, that the management of the school does not embrace all those objects which ought to be aimed at in such an institution; and that the artists entrusted with the important duties of teachers do not hold a proper position.

"The present system of directorship," says Mr. Townsend, "whatever good may flow from it, is attended with inestimable injury, in the fact of its placing a barrier between the gentlemen who see the whole working of the school, viz., the masters, and the members of the council who see but little of it. The latter body is composed of gentlemen who seldom or never visit the classes, and who only occasionally attend the monthly meetings, all eminent in station, and some indeed engrossed by the absorbing duties of the state; the views, opinions, and policy, therefore, of the director for the time being, must necessarily have the most important influence,—must, in fact, mainly determine the educational and material advantages to be supplied by the establishment."

The evidence of both writers shews, that our head school of design is without a *bona fide* class of design! and that it is in fact nothing more than an ordinary drawing school.

Lectures are quite abandoned:—

"*At present* Copying *is the plan laid down*, and thus, with the exception of occasional explanations from the director and masters, the pupil is led to no higher exertion of his faculties than the desire to *imitate*. Under the lecture system, he would be led to gradually examine every part of the studies requisite for the industrial artist; and thus, armed with knowledge, his skill would be enabled to blend into appropriate combinations that poetic sentiment which may be associated with the most humble objects. Nature would then present to him, as she did to the Greeks and the Gothic architects, the source of renewed ideas and energies, through the new perceptions awakened in his mind; because the poetic fancy discovers and appropriates—(after the due education of the eye and the hand in the embodiment of ideas)—the lines of grace and the suggestions of beauty in every ivy and lichen that decorates the ruined wall, every tendril of the convolvulus, or wisp of the wild hop, that calls up a sense and feeling of elegance when looking upon a wayside hawthorn hedge. It is, indeed, in this delight of the *maker* of ornamental art that the moral effects of such education are most drawn out; while it is to the curious examination of his ideas of nature, as expressed with skill, transformed with meaning, or combined with ingenuity, that commerce owes the rising desire to *possess*, and the consequent value of the product as an object of barter."

Mr. Richardson urges the necessity of a *practical* course:—

"Our pupil should be encouraged to bring his shop patterns, the drawings he works from, no matter how dirty, provided they relate practically to his business. He should then, with the assistance the school would give, be taught to draw them again, and to mark the difference. If he has no such drawings, they should be supplied by the school: they do not require to be elaborate; a few dark lines, such as many theoretical persons would treat with contempt, are, in the early stages, of more use to the class of students with whom we have to do, than the most exquisite Italian drawings. We have silver-smiths, chasers, masons, lamp-makers, cabinet-makers, brass-founders, among the students. I need not remark upon the interest a young man would naturally feel in those matters that form his daily business; but I would ask whether his feelings of emulation would not receive an additional impulse, when he found he was in the way to elevate himself in his business, to be of more use to his employer, and to receive better wages?"

"As soon as the student has learnt the practical application of drawing to his own business, he should not only be permitted, but encouraged, to design, or draw out suitable matters connected with it."

The application of art to commerce or manufactures is actually prohibited:—

"I have never yet been permitted," says Mr. Richardson, "during the period I have been at the school, to give the slightest practical direction to the study of the pupils. I have always been instructed to make my tuition purely elementary, and have been always told that the young men must apply it as they best could to their several callings; and, for this strange reason, that were it not so, the young men would become drudges to their masters, who would reap a fortune through their acquirements. A most illogical deduction, it appears to me, that the designer should become a drudge, and the mere copyist should not.

In order to illustrate the system pursued, I would beg, my lords and gentlemen, to mention one case which occurred a few months since. One of my pupils, a young man, a master ironmonger, requested me to shew him how to draw an ornamental stove front. He had been some time in the School of Design, and was a good draughtsman. I accordingly set him to work, when the director interfered, took the young man under his own tuition, placed before him an elevation of the Temple of Theseus, from Stuart, and directed him to copy it by a scale of modules and minutes. In a few evenings the young man left the school. By the same system my three classes of ornamental drawing, architecture, and perspective, lost, in the middle of the season, from ten to fifteen of the senior pupils, who would willingly have remained, had they been allowed such a course of study as could have been practically applied to their several businesses."

And yet, what says common sense and Professor Wagen on the point?—

"The inventive powers of the artist ought equally to be brought to bear on the special manufacture which he is destined hereafter to pursue: this principle is judiciously adopted in the *Gewerb* institution at Berlin; in which, after one year of general instruction in art, the pupil selects a branch of manufacture which he has chosen: unless the arts and manufactures be practically combined, the unsuccessful

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